ON SCENE

THE NATIONAL MARITIME SAR REVIEW

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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COLD WATER SURVIVAL

A recent SAR case proves that with the proper knowledge and equipment persons can greatly extend their life expectancy in a cold water survival situation. An excellent source of information can be found in CG-473 "A POCKET GUIDE TO COLD WATER SURVIVAL" dated September 1975, recently distributed to the field.

Three persons found themselves in 50 degree water after their sailboat capsized. Due to weather conditions and the fact that they had no signaling equipment, their rescue wasn't effected until 23 hours later. Two of the three survived the ordeal due primarily to heavy warm clothing, rain gear, and the fact that they kept as much of their bodies out of the water as possible by sitting on the capsized boat. According to life expectancy charts, these two persons survived approximately seven times longer than would be expected if they had been immersed in the cold water. So remember, when searching for persons that might be exposed to cold water, use the life expectancy charts only as a helpful guideline. SAR cases can have many unknown factors that can extend life expectancy.

Editor's Note: *The following item is reprinted from the SAR Newsletter 2/77 of the 7th Coast Guard District as it may be helpful to the other districts.*

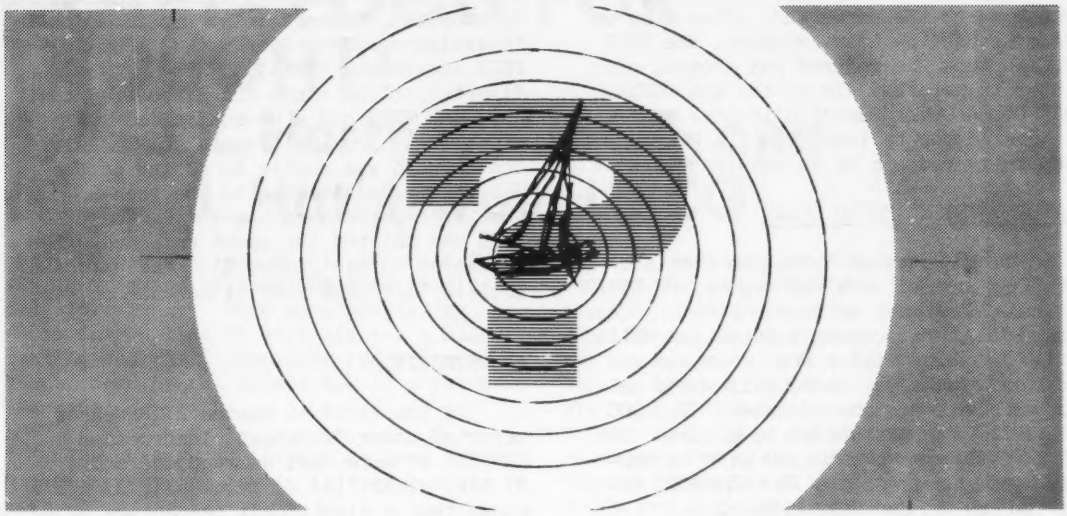
STOW ALL GEAR

OKAY ALL YOU SHIP AND BOAT DRIVERS ... we don't often get rough weather down here in the "Sunny South", but are you prepared for it? Apparently several of our units were not during the recent bad weather in January. One 95 footer Skipper was reporting 30-35 foot seas and winds of 60 knots with gusts to 90. Apparently he was ready for it because he completed a successful mission under most adverse conditions. Another WPB was not so lucky. He took some damage to his vessel from heavy seas. Among other things, it ripped a hatch on him. The reason: They failed to remove the air conditioner from the hatch before putting to sea. Result: a lot of dollars and the loss of the boat for seven days.

Each time we have a little rough weather the same situations arise again and again. Someone either forgets to take the awning down, dog the hatches, secure the galley, etc. and we get damage and sometimes injury reports. We seem to recall the naval term: "Stow and secure all gear for heavy seas". How about you .....?

ON SCENE is a SAR publication published by the Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard as a source of information concerning current and proposed procedures as well as new developments in SAR. Articles contained herein are non-record and non-directive.

MORE YACHT EPIRB CASES



Here are some more cases which demonstrate the spectacular success of the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) when used by sea-going yachts.

SAILING VESSEL KWAI-TSZE

On 10 August 1976 the KWAI-TSZE activited an EPIRB off the west coast of the United States when both persons on board became sick. Civil and military aircraft in the area approximated the position and a Coast Guard HC-130 was diverted to locate it. Upon location the aircraft passed information to medical authorities ashore. Upon their advice attempts were begun to evacuate one person who had suffered epileptic convulsions. The CGC PT BARROW arrived on scene and escorted the KWAI-TSZE toward shore. Due to the improvement of the patient, evacuation was not necessary and the yacht was escorted to San Francisco.

SLOOP LADY KEY

As the result of reports of EPIRB signals heard by transiting aircraft on 1 November 1976, an HC-130 aircraft from Coast Guard Air Station, Elizabeth City, NC was dispatched over the Atlantic to search for the source. When located, it was discovered that the signal was coming from the sloop LADY KEY. There were 5 persons on board suffering from seasickness and lack of food for 5 days. An HH-3F helicopter from Elizabeth City evacuated four of the persons on board, including 2 children. The CGC CHILULA proceeded to the scene and towed the LADY KEY, with the remaining person on board, to Moorhead City ,NC.

SAILING VESSEL TANGAROA

On 8 November 1976 numerous reports of EPIRB signals were received from transiting aircraft over the North Atlantic ocean between Bermuda and the United States. A Coast Guard HC-130 aircraft homed in on the signal coming from the TANGAROA which was disabled with a broken rudder. The M/V SABINE diverted to stand by the disabled yacht. When the yacht began taking on water the SABINE was unable to transfer the 4 persons on board due to weather, size and cargo. However, the M/V STERLING arrived on scene and made the rescue. The TANGAROA was abandoned as a derelict.

SAILING VESSEL SUNRISE

Numerous reports of EPIRB signals on 9 November 1976 led an Elizabeth City HC-130 to the SUNRISE approximately 210 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras. Upon

arrival, the aircraft discovered that one of the crew was suffering from a possible broken neck. The M/V ESSO TORINO was vectored to the scene and, after some delay caused by heavy weather, the ESSO TORINO took the injured man aboard, and later transferred him to the USS MOUNT BAKER. A Coast Guard helicopter than evacuated the patient from the MOUNT BAKER and delivered him to an ambulance ashore.

SAILING VESSEL HELLO DOLLY

On 18 November 1976, San Juan air traffic control received reports of EPIRB signals northwest of Puerto Rico. A Coast Guard HH-3F helicopter located the HELLO DOLLY disabled with a fuel shortage and unable to make way under sail while taking on small amounts of water. The CGC WHITEHORN was dispatched to assist. The HELLO DOLLY was eventually able to proceed under sail so the PT WHITEHORN escorted her to San Juan harbor.

SAILING VESSEL BORN FREE II

On 26 November 1976, two Western Airline aircraft reported EPIRB signals approximately 900 miles northeast of Honolulu, Hawaii. An HC-130 from Coast Guard Air Station, Barbers Point proceeded to investigate and located the 40 foot BORN FREE apparently disabled. The M/V KAPELLE diverted to the scene and discovered that the BORN FREE had a broken rudder while on a voyage from California to Honolulu. The KAPELLE was unable to assist so the USS FREDERICK diverted to the scene, took the three persons on board from the BORN FREE and hoisted the yacht on board--then proceeded to San Diego, CA. See expanded article "S/V BORN FREE II Rescue" on page 7.

A POSTSCRIPT

Of the first 64 marine EPIRB cases reported under Commandant Instruction 2370.1, 27 were real emergencies and 37 were classified as false alarms. This shows that a significant percentage of all marine EPIRB signals heard are the real thing.

Editor's Note: *The following item is reprinted from the SAR Newsletter 1/77 of the 1st Coast Guard District as it may be helpful to the other districts.*

BOAT COXSWAINS

Boat Coxswains have performed well this year; they don't receive much credit, but their responsibility is well known considering the cost of the CG boats they are piloting (approximately $200,000 or more apiece) and the cost of the vessels they are towing.

There are a few weak points that should be brought up that have caused a lot of down time on our SAR resources.

a. We had approximately 15 groundings and most could have been prevented if more care and better "dead reckoning" piloting practices had been used. Let's use charts and brush up on our dead reckoning piloting using the data on a chart, taking bearings to determine position, and plotting the courses steered and distance travelled through the water.

b. Another problem that caused a lot of down time was "line in the screw." We had about 15 boats with this problem that we know about. What can we do to prevent this, since it was our mooring lines and tow lines that were causing us the problem?

1. One of the things we find is lack of a person assigned to tend the tow line. Anytime you're passing a line or slowing down, it is a must to have someone tending the line.

2. Mooring lines should be put below decks or secured somewhere on the boat. Don't let the line get washed overboard and into the screw. 41's hate to have lines in their screws. It wipes them out for a long time, meaning a SAR resource is not available.

c. Coming alongside sailboats has caused us a lot of problems. Coxswains should evaluate the situation before getting close to a sailboat.

1 SEARCH AREA ÷ 17 AIRCRAFT = FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

By LT J.R. Hartney, USCG and LTjg J.J. Hathaway, USCG

QUESTION: How do you fit 17 aircraft into a 63,000 square mile search area safely and effectively? Even more perplexing, where do you find 17 aircraft for a mid-Pacific search? These were two big questions faced by the CCGD12 RCC in a recent SAR case.

The answers to these questions serve as an interesting lesson in search planning.

On 12 September 1976, the S/V "SPIRIT" departed Honolulu enroute San Francisco Bay. On the evening of 18 October 1976, 2 persons from the "SPIRIT" were recovered from a raft by a passing merchant vessel some 800 miles west of San Francisco. The survivors reported that their vessel sank suddenly in a storm on 27 September, and that 3 of their companions had abandoned the "SPIRIT" into another raft. The two rafts had initially been lashed together but drifted apart after about 12 hours of tossing about in the stormy seas.

This report initiated one of the most extensive mid-Pacific searches in recent years.

The first three days of searching utilized from 5 to 8 aircraft per day, assigned in CASP (Computer Assisted Search Planning) generated high detection probability areas. Having been frustrated in these first 3 days, and realizing there remained a very good chance the second raft was still afloat with survivors aboard, it was decided to organize an "all-out" effort on the fourth day.

The USS COOK (FF-1083), equipped with a LAMPS helicopter, was already on scene and assigned as OSC. The CGC CAMPBELL was enroute to the scene, but would not arrive until the next day. A high altitude photographic reconnissance flight, arranged through the Air Force, had been planned for the two previous days but postponed each time due to cloud coverage. On the fourth day it was finally scheduled as a "GO" and assigned a 57,600 square mile area. The task of locating search aircraft fell to the controller and assistant. First, a request for eight aircraft went to COMTHIRDFLT, which had been providing several P-3's per day. Their answer "sorry, we can only give you six." Not too disappointing an answer! Next a call to AFRCC Scott requesting; "any and all you can give us." Meanwhile, we made countless calls on our own, checking other military sources. Several hours later due to our combined efforts 8 additional aircraft were found; 4 were ARRS but the others were MAC and had no SAR experience. Nonetheless, all were added to the list.

We now had 6 Navy, 8 Air Force, and 3 Coast Guard aircraft. They represented 11 commands from as far away as Washington State, Texas and Honolulu.

In the wee hours of the morning the Search Planner and the Duty Controller wrestled with the problem that confronted them - How to fit 17 aircraft SAFELY into adjacent search areas in the mid-Pacific. They had planned multi-unit searches in the past but never anything on the scale that presented itself now. Because the search was geared to locating a small raft, the trackspacing involved was limited to between 3 and 4 miles. Combined with the various aircraft on scene endurances and search speeds, this translated into a search capability of 62,700 square miles. However, the aircraft were to search CASP generated high detection probability areas. When laid out they formed an irregular, disjointed area. With search effort capabilities ranging

from 3,300 to 6,200 square miles per aircraft, the next problem was to arrange search areas in the least confusing manner and still safely, effectively cover required areas. No small task!

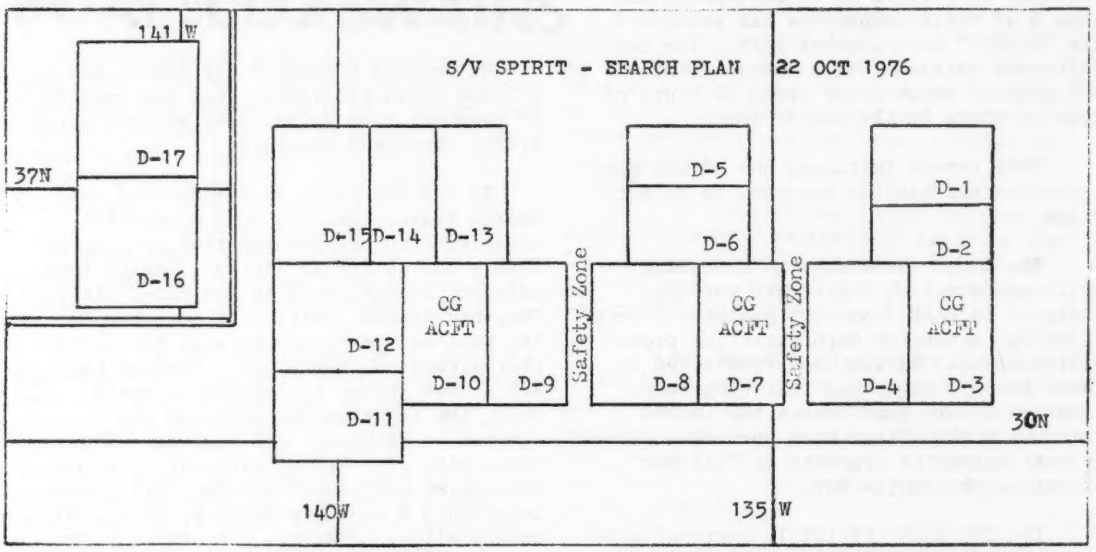
The Search Planners were interrupted by a phone call - it was the California Air National Guard asking about the next day's search; "if you guys can arrange it, sure would like to be in an area next to one of your Coast Guard C-130's. It really gets hairy out there with several aircraft in adjacent areas, and they keep things running smooth and everyone in line." This provided us with the idea to solve our dilemma; of the 17 areas assigned for searching, 15 were linked together in an odd-shaped, east/west string. Since 3 Coast Guard aircraft were to be on scene, it was decided to divide this large area into three groups, each separated by a 15 mile wide "safety zone", and each with a Coast Guard aircraft assigned. This gave us a total of four separate areas with 2 to 7 SRU's in each. These areas were further sub-divided into individual search areas with much less effort (inset).

Word was passed informally to the OSC that this arrangement would be used and that the Coast Guard C-130's could be designated as OSC's in their sub-areas, as the on scene situation dictated.

As the day's activities began, all that could be done in the RCC was to wait impatiently for information as to how the search was progressing. Everyone felt a learned apprehension of sending 17 assorted aircraft into a concentrated search area, which did not help a bit. As information began to filter into the RCC, however, it soon became apparent that everything was progressing without a "HITCH"; the pilots felt comfortable in their assigned areas and the Coast Guard aircraft commanders were expertly controlling air traffic in their function of sub-OSC's. We all breathed a sigh of relief!

It wasn't until two days later, on 24 October, that our search came to a successful conclusion with the sighting of the raft by a search aircraft and the pick-up of one survivor by the CGC CAMPBELL. (Two persons had expired due to exposure before our search ever began).

The case is now closed but the lessons learned and experience gained, especially from the "big day", will be utilized for many years and SAR cases to come.



S/V BORN FREE II--RESCUE

By QMC E.F. Drumheller, USCG and QM1 S.D. Brown, USCG

At 1450W 26 November 1976, RCC Honolulu received a report from the FAA that an ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitter) broadcasting on 121.5 MHz had been heard by two transiting aircraft. The aircraft were headed in opposite directions when they picked up the signal approximately 900 miles northeast of Honolulu.

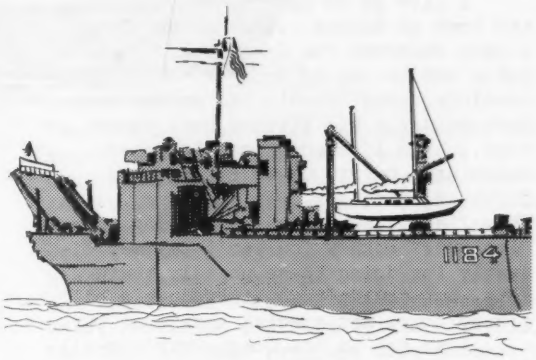
Two Coast Guard C-130 aircraft were launched, one from Barbers Point, Oahu to locate the ELT and another from San Francisco to provide an on scene relief. At 2030W, Coast Guard 1345 out of Honolulu located the source of the ELT as a small S/V with 3 POB flashing a red light at position 24-10N, 142-35W. Because of darkness and lack of communication with the vessel CG 1345 was unable to determine the nature of the distress or the condition of the vessel.

Through an AMVER SURPIC a vessel was located 85 miles north of scene. The M/V KAPELLE, a Netherlands registered cargo ship, was contacted and she immediately diverted to the scene. Coast Guard 1345 established communications with M/V KAPELLE and vectored her to the scene. With this accomplished, Coast Guard 1345 was relieved by Coast Guard 1453 as OSC and departed for Barbers Point.

Two hours later at 0245W 27 November, M/V KAPELLE arrived on scene and reported identity of the disabled vessel as BORN FREE II, a 41 FT S/V enroute from Dana Point, California to Honolulu with 3 POB. The S/V had a broken rudder which could not be repaired by KAPELLE. Arrangements were made by RCC Honolulu through Commander Third Fleet for the USS FREDRICK, a Navy LST, to divert from normal deployment to assist as required, perhaps by repairing the rudder.

Coast Guard 1453 departed scene after dropping an emergency radio to the stricken S/V for further communications with Coast Guard Communications Station Honolulu. It was confirmed that all 3 people in BORN FREE II were in good condition.

The USS FREDRICK was unable to repair the rudder when she arrived on scene approximately 5 hours later. Unable to repair the rudder and deciding against towing BORN FREE II to San Diego, CA, USS FREDRICK devised a novel solution to the problem. USS FREDRICK, with a number of booms on board, simply hoisted BORN FREE II to her deck and set sail for her homeport, San Diego, which she had not seen for several months. A few days later BORN FREE II and her three man crew were deposited safely inport.



The above incident re-emphasizes the importance for boaters to carry ELT's as part of their lifesaving equipment when operating beyond the range of marine VHF radio distress coverage (more than 20 miles offshore). The ELT greatly increases chances of a boater being rescued should a distress occur.

Editor's Note:

The marine device is called an EPIRB rather than ELT which is the aeronautical device. That stands for Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon.

KUDOS CORNER

To: Senator Ted Stevens

I live in an apartment overlooking the town of Kodiak....All winter long I have observed the Coast Guard boats going out to sea in some of the most incredible, unbelievable bad weather..... Last Sunday a big fishing boat caught on fire....and I watched the big Coast Guard boat hurry out to it and then fight the fire for over two hours..... They finally succeeded in getting the fire out. I know you can't pay men directly for doing these ungodly brave acts, but couldn't you introduce a bill giving these men special hazardous pay. .....I am not in the Coast Guard or military, so please, I'm not trying to get extra money for me. I'm just an old civilian, getting ready to retire who believes that a group of men with extra special courage should be rewarded..... /s/ Loyd McKinley

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To: Group Commander, Fort Macon, NC

The rapid response and obvious readiness demonstrated by Commander Coast Guard Group, Fort Macon and CG 44343 during the USS DIRECT (MSO 480) MEDEVAC is greatly appreciated by Commander Naval Surface Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet. Well done. /s/ Commander Surface Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet

To: Commandant (and others)

Message quoted below speaks for itself.....Quote: Mrs. Nancy Phillips has asked me to express her sincerest appreciation to you and all persons involved in the massive joint-service rescue effort conducted in search of her late husband, Captain Vance Phillips. She realizes the search was executed by trained professionals using the best techniques and technology available, but she stated that these professionals were also real people who worked around the clock---thru Mothers Day---in the hope of locating Captain Phillips. She wants somehow to let as many of these people as possible know her personal gratitude. It was heartwarming to witness her concern for others at the peak of her personal tragedy. Nancy Phillips is an exceptional lady---The Phillips children are in good hands. End quote. /s/ General Robert J. Dixon, Commander Tactical Air Command

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To: Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Station, Townsend Inlet, NJ

Please accept my thanks and sincere appreciation for my rescue by the Coast Guard last Thursday....when my small sailboat capsized.....I am sure that the prompt response and search by your two boats and the helicopter from the Cape May Station saved my life..... The coxswain and crew of the large boat who located me in the water and picked me up were very efficient and did an outstanding rescue job at night under very difficult conditions.....All of those involved in the search are to be highly commended for their prompt response and efficient search. I should like to call particular attention to the efficient seamanship and boat handling by BM3/C Heylak and his crew: MK3/C McNew, SN Radzai and SN Maddonado..... /s/ Wallace A. Utley, CDR, USN (Ret)

THREE CASE STUDIES
F/V ROSE M--OVERDUE

On 12 June 1976 the F/V ROSE M departed Coss Bay, Oregon, on a planned four or five day fishing trip. Aboard the 38 foot vessel were the owner/operator and his daughter. They were reported overdue on the evening of 18 June. Thus began an extensive surface and air search that continued through 25 June when the unsuccessful search was suspended. Subsequently, on 3 July the survivors were picked up, adrift, by a passing fishing vessel. They had been adrift some 20 days. On debriefing the survivors, it was learned that they were in the areas actually searched at least one day and that they had heard one aircraft but were unable to see it due to poor visibility. A difference of opinion as to the actual color of the vessel came to light after the vessel was located and towed to Monterey, California. All information from the reporting sources gave a color of blue or light blue, but both the rescuing fishing vessel and the Coast Guard boat crews who saw it described it as white.

The Computer Assisted Search Planning (CASP) was used throughout the case. Minor errors in inputs were discovered and corrected during the prosecution of the case. When the search was suspended, the Search Effectiveness had reached 94.5%. Approximately 73 aircraft hours and numerours vessel sorties had been expended. Correlation of the actual position of the vessel with the CASP and SARP (Search and Rescue Planning system) solutions, after the vessel was located, was attempted. Using the known position of the distress, the CASP and SARP programs were rerun. The SARP program was amazingly accurate (datum being only 60 miles from the actual position of the vessel after 20 days) but the CASP program excluded the probability that the vessel could be any where near the actual recovery position or the SARP position. This fact when brought to the attention of the Operations Analysis Branch of Commander, Atlantic Area resulted in a caution to all users, in the form of a "Computer SAR Advisory".

This is an outstanding example of the value of analyzing a case carefully where something apparently has gone wrong. The analysis in this instance detected a problem with automatic wind drifting and permitted steps to be taken to avoid the same problem in the immediate future and then to rectify the problem in the CASP system.

TWENTY-TWO FOOT OUTBOARD-- OVERDUE CAPE COD BAY

This 22 foot outboard was reported overdue by the wife of the owner/operator on 24 June 1976. The two people on board had departed from Scituate, Massachusetts on the 23rd for a fishing trip 10 miles off Scituate. The boat was all white, with a CB radio, running lights, compass, fathometer, PFD's, charts, and no anchor. It was reported as of double hull construction and "unsinkable". Last communications with the boat had been at 1800 on the 23rd. Various people gave reports on the possible whereabouts of the boat based on their knowledge of the operator's habits. Search was planned assuming that the target was a disabled boat and/or debris. Drift computations were made manually and by use of the SARP computer program.

Computer supplied wind and current data were used in the first run. Wind data was then evaluated as incorrect after comparison with observations by Coast Guard Stations in the area. Subsequent wind information was user supplied to the computer as obtained by local observations. Sea current data was initially computer supplied and then was user supplied following the deployment and observation of a Datum Marker Buoy (DMB).

Searches continued until 0826 local time on 26 July when an HH-3 Coast Guard helicopter sighted one man on top of the capsized boat. The body of the remaining person was located shortly thereafter. The pilot of the HH-3 LCDR William G. Fisher stated:

> "While flying our assigned search area....., the hoist operator re-

ported....a white box pass under the aircraft....We landed and retreived the object which was back of a console type boat seat. After marking the spot with a marine marker, we climbed to altitude to update our sensors, when the co-pilot spotted the overturned boat in the 10 o'clock position.....The survivor was kneeling on the boat....Because the man's clothes were dark, the boat was submerged, and no signals available, the only way it stood out was from overhead where the white sides were visible under water."

The helicopter landed on the water and picked up the exhausted survivor. The survivor had been able to save himself by staying out of the cold water, standing on his capsized boat. The SAR Coordinator credited this with saving his life by preventing hypothermia. He also noted that the lack of contrasting colors on the boat and the lack of signaling equipment by the survivor almost resulted in his not being located.

In a subsequent case in the same district two survivors were able to save themselves from hypothermia by sitting on top of their overturned boat. A future issue will carry an account of that case.

SEVENTEEN FOOT OUTBOARD-- OVERDUE IN GULF

On 22 April 1976 Miami RCC received a request from the Deputy Administrator, Grand Cayman Island, to assist in locating a small boat overdue from a fishing trip. The boat had departed Grand Cayman on 21 April 1976 and had not been seen since. It was a 17 foot open boat with a white canopy top, white hull trimmed in blue and powered by a 40 H. P. outboard. There were three persons on board. A search was conducted from 22 April thru 24 April, and another was scheduled for 25 April when the M/V BANANA PLANTER reported having picked up the three men and their boat the night before.

The survivors reported sighting one of the search planes on the morning of 23

April. Reconstruction of the situation shows that the boat had to be in the northwest corner of search area A-3 at the time. The only daylight signal used was a white tee shirt attached to the radio antenna. This along with the color of the boat made for a difficult target indeed. Fortunately for the men on board they did have a flashlight which was instrumental in attracting the attention of the BANANA PLANTER at night.

By the second day of the search, the boat had drifted out of the search area and beyond the standard radius for a second search. The actual drift rate was determined to be over 2 knots, much higher than used in search planning. The SAR Coordinator opined that the problem centered on using too low a leeway speed for this type of boat. He stated that, for searches in the Gulf Stream involving light boats with canvas or Bimini tops one drift plot is computed using a leeway vector straight downwind at a speed between 6% to 10% of the wind velocity---the lighter the boat the higher the percentage. This practice was developed through past observations and enabled the search planner to account for maximum drift possibility. The practice was not used in this case, but the SAR Coordinator said that, if it had been used, computed datum would have been closer to actual datum and the search areas might have included the target on the second day.

Comment on the case pointed out that the present formula for a boat of the type involved is: LEEWAY = 0.07U + 0.04, where U is the windspeed in knots. Although this average value seemed to support the 6% to 10% mentioned in the study, it was pointed out that care should be used in assuming a general rule from a small number of cases.

Of importance here however, is the evidence that the SAR Coordinator's staff is alert to special environmental factors in his area. This brings to mind a recommendation from a recent Marine Board of Investigation in another case:

> "That the information available through local knowledge, search and rescue debriefings, search plan analysis and data on current movements in the coastal areas of high SAR potential be compiled for handy reference so that search efforts can be more effectively coordinated to predict water surface movements at various stages of tidal and wind conditions."

WHY COLLECT SAR DATA?

The ever increasing administrative burden placed on operational units to collect management information makes this type of question relevant. Informal surveys often yield a somewhat apathetic interest in collecting and reporting SAR data. At some SAR facilities only the serious cases get reported. The "small stuff", that's starting to consume a significant number of manhours, doesn't always make it into the data system. One station OIC stated "Look, this is a very active unit! During peak season weekends, we can either respond to SAR cases, or fill out those *?#@ Assistance Reports. But we can't do both in a timely fashion!" Considering the personnel manning situation and average station workweek, the salty old Chief had a valid point. Why then all this fuss about submitting Assistance Reports? What is so important about collecting SAR data?

The "why" and "what" are all valid questions. The best approach may be to describe the use made of SAR data. SAR statistics, generated from a computerized data base, are utilized at various staff levels from district planners to Headquarters Program and Facility Managers. The Commandant often directly refers to SAR statistics before congressional hearings. SAR data routinely supports such program decisions as: (1) establishment, disestablishment, or relocation of SAR facilities; (2) seasonal operation of SAR stations; (3) reprogramming of SAR resources based on workload; (4) personnel manning levels; (5) performance evaluation of SAR boats; (6) procurement of new SAR vehicles; (7) SAR case analysis to improve services rendered; etc.

During the past three months, the SAR Data Section at Headquarters received about 110 requests per month for data support services. Nearly 15% of these requests came from Coast Guard District/field units. They ranged from SAR density plots to standard output reports (e.g., Response Benefit Report indicating deaths prevented/property loss prevented by reporting unit) to data base retrieval runs (e.g., lives lost vs distance offshore).

Another significant use of SAR data is with the budgetary process. Competition for limited funds among Coast Guard programs is keen. Strong quantitative justification is always required for new billets or replacement hardware.

The recent development of SAR Program Standards in the areas of alerting, responding and locating directly focused on the SAR data system. Service-wide operational performance is measured and compared against these program standards to determine the progress we're making towards achieving our stated goals. The SAR Operating Program Plan, encompassing the program standards and other quantitative expressions of SAR data, has been recently submitted to the Commandant for his review and approval.

In summary, the expression "the chain is only as strong as the weakest link" has meaning here. If that weak link is the quantity and/or quality of SAR data, then our chances of either making the right decisions, or obtaining appropriate program funding are greatly diminished. Are those *?#@ Assistance Reports important? Not only yes, but h_ _ _ yes! SAR data is utilized. Lack of data can directly effect the status of the reporting unit. Your cooperation in accurately completing the Assistance Reports, and their timely submission does play a vital role in improving the overall SAR system.

SAR Chief's Note: There is a direct relationship between how well we do in the SAR program and SAR data. In getting people and equipment, in workweek reduction efforts, in developing new skills and techniques and in other ways, we rely heavily on the Assistance Reports. The information on the forms represents work done. Getting the information into the SAR Data Base quickly means we can use it sooner to help get the resources we need. The "little" cases also represent work done, and we need them too. In fact, if we knew about the cases we couldn't do, that would also help to show how much work there is to do.

So, please get the Assistance Reports in, and get them edited and into the SAR Data Base as soon as possible. We need the information to help us get SAR resources.

L. A. White

We're All in the Same Boat!
Suggestion Savings Benefit Everyone

Distribution (SDL No. 105)

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